

This is in regards to the NFL blackouts from a Tampa Bay Bucs fan's perspective. I understand the NFL owners, as businessmen, have the right under existing law to limit access to their product, and while I can't understand why they would want to create a growing gap between their fan base and any of their teams, that is their call. What I can't understand is why the FCC would have a rule "requiring" the blackout of local games unless sold out 72 hours prior to game start. Is there a vested national interest in keeping fans in the Tampa Bay area from watching the Bucs? Would local fans watching the Bucs in a less-than-sold-out home game endanger our democracy? Or is the rule in place to give the NFL owners political cover, allowing them to say, "It's not us, it's the FCC..."?

We hear a lot today about the role of government, and there is a lot of disagreement in our country regarding that role. But I am unaware of any political constituency in the country (aside from the NFL owners, perhaps...) that espouses FCC rules on what professional sports events will be shown on local television (based on the ability of a team to attract fans to a stadium, and the ability of fans to afford to attend games in person) as a legitimate and important government concern.

Please eliminate the FCC rule. If the NFL owners want to black out local fans as punishment for not filling the stadium seats, then let them do that, don't let them blame our government. It's not a government issue.

Thank you,

Robert Leibforth